

TMC NEWSLETTER

January — February 1987
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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH 34 SERANGOON GARDEN WAY (1955)

Pastor: Rev. Melvin Huang

Tel: 2824443

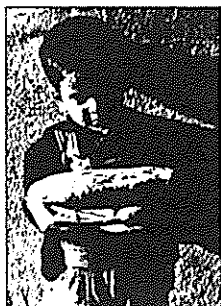
Jesus' Life And Teaching

We are now in the season of Epiphany, which began on January 6 (Epiphany Day). It is a season when we celebrate Jesus Christ "shown forth" or "manifested" (epiphanized) to all mankind as Saviour of the World.

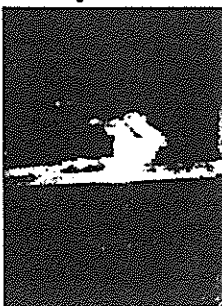
When I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour a few years ago, I remember being introduced to John's Gospel first of all. Recently, I learnt that John's Gospel is built round two sets of seven; seven signs (or miracles) which Jesus performed, and seven sayings (the famous "I am" passages) which describe who Jesus was and what He had come to do.

I would like now to share these with you.

'I am the bread of life' 6:35



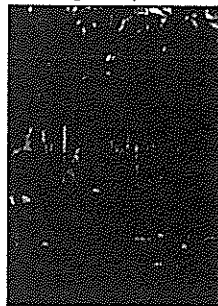
'I am the light of the world' 8:12



'I am the gate for the sheep' 10:7



'I am the good shepherd' 10:11



Water turned into wine
2:1-11

An official's son healed
at Capernaum
4:46-54

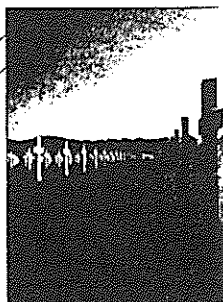
A man healed at the
Pool of Bethesda
5:1-9

The feeding of
five thousand
6:1-13

Jesus walks on water
6:16-21

Healing of the man
born blind
9:1-41

The raising of Lazarus
11:1-44



'I am the resurrection
and the life' 11:25



'I am the way, the truth
and the life' 14:6



'I am the real vine' 15:1

Minding Our P's and Q's

(Meaningful Membership) Ephesians 4:11-16
TMC Membership Sunday 9 Nov '86

When I was in Primary 5 or 6 – many, many, many years ago – we used an English Textbook called “First Aid in English” – from which I learned about “Minding your P's and Q's” – a saying which means being careful about one's manners and form, to be proper in behaviour. But fear not – this isn't a sermon on proper mannerism although you would think that might be a place for that.

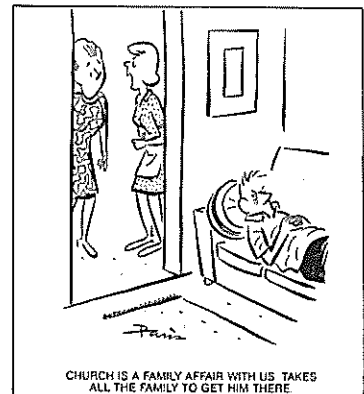
For example – in minding our P's & Q's there would be a lot to say about minding our P's, let alone Q's. P's like parking, for instance, and the continuous announcements show; P's like punctuality – how about that for minding our P's – why in fact at our Church Retreat on Deepavali, it was said that we need to move everyone toward an N.A.P. – A New Age of Punctuality, or other P's – public spiritedness, in other words, civic mindedness or plain politeness.

But as important as that is in our Christian witness – this isn't the main focus of our thinking to-day. Today we want to emphasise P's and Q's of a different sort – On this Membership Sunday we want to emphasise Membership P's & Q's.

Firstly, the P's. And here let me remind ourselves about that part of our vows we make at confirmation into Membership to be loyal to the Methodist Church with our prayers, presence, gifts and service.

So the first two P's are **Prayers and Presence**. We need to be faithful in our prayer life for the church. We need to pray for the church, for one another and for the pastor.

We also need to be faithful by our presence – by regular attendance at church and so avoid being “easy” Christians, I mean “E C” Christians – you know E for Easter and C for Christmas – because that's the only time the “E C” Christians attend Church. And as I often remind the Membership Class don't say, I'll be with you in “spirit”. If everyone said that, you'll end up with a church full of “spirits” and little else.



Surely you remember the story told by Dr Tay Eng Soon, about the teacher who decided to teach his students by cassette recorder, instead of being present himself, and got the shock of his life when he discovered that they in turn replaced **their** presence with their own cassette recorders, recording their recorded teacher on their recorders.

Without presence, that's the way we'll end up as well.

The third P is **Pledging** – equivalent to gifts in our vows. A man was complaining to his friend – My wife is always asking me for money – last week she asked for \$50, this week she asked for \$100 and just yesterday \$200. ‘That's terrible’ his friend replies, “What on earth does she spend all that money on?” “I don't know,” the man says, “I haven't given her any yet.” It seems to me that those who actually complain like the husband are those who give least and last or who haven't given any yet.

In fact the Church should **not** have to be like the wife always asking for money – because it is a vow of membership to be loyal with our gifts and in Methodist terms that means pledging.

It is a point of concern that the percentage of members pledging in our Church is below what it ought to be, to put it politely. In fact the percentage has dropped from last year's but Praise God the total has increased.

And a good number of friends, non-members, pledge. So we need to seriously seek to eventually have the total Church membership pledging, as this is good personal stewardship and helps the church to be good at financial stewardship as well. Let me ask all new members and those preparing for membership to prayerfully determine to pledge and practise this discipline of giving. I believe that it is not only Biblical and pleasing to God as part of our worship – but giving multiplies blessings and extends the work of God's kingdom beyond the gift itself.

A former US marine tells this story:

My marine buddy and I were taking a lunch break, eating our rations on the steps of an improvised medical clinic that we were helping set up for Vietnamese civilians. We had almost finished our meal before we noticed a small, frail boy who was watching us intently. He was about 11, and it was clear that he was being treated for malnutrition. We knew he was hungry. But he was not begging – just looking at us with friendly curiosity. My partner and I offered the child the only food we had left, a round chocolate disc that fits in the bottom of a C-ration can. Wordlessly, he accepted the gift, then carefully broke it into three equal pieces. Placing one in my hand and one in my buddy's, he bowed an impeccably gracious bow and slipped away.

You see, giving to the Lord, which pledging allows us to do systematically is like this story – the amount may be limited but the effects are blessings shared, added, indeed multiplied so that others and you yourself are tremendously blessed in giving.

The fourth P is **Participation** (that's being loyal with our service).

My sister is studying for her Ph D in Canada. She has a sense of humour and some time ago she sent me a newspaper cutting entitled 'How to Spot a Perfect Pastor'. If you've been to North America you probably have heard of Ann Landers. I'd like to read to you what that newspaper says.

Dear Ann Landers: The enclosed was circulated in church this morning. It's an eye-opener for people who change churches or quit going because they think the pastor isn't doing enough. Please print it. It's more than just funny. — **Indiana.**

Dear Indy: It's a gem. Thanks for sharing.

The Perfect Pastor

Results of a computerized survey indicate that the perfect pastor preaches exactly 15 minutes. He condemns sin, but never embarrasses anyone. He works from 8 a.m. until midnight and is also the janitor.

He makes \$60 a week, wears good clothes, drives a new car, and gives \$50 a week to the poor. He is 28 years old, has been preaching for 25 years, is wonderfully gentle and handsome, loves to work with teenagers and spends countless hours with senior citizens. He makes 15 calls daily on parish families, shut-ins and hospital patients, and is always in his office when he is needed.

If your pastor does not measure up, simply send this letter to six other parishes that are tired of their pastors, too. Then bundle up your pastor and send him to the church at the top of the list. In one week you will receive 1,643 pastors. One of them should be perfect.

I especially like the chain-letter part. Of course I think chain-letters are nonsense but in this article – it's really kind of cute. The point, though, of this is clear; there is no such thing as a perfect pastor. The work of the church is not solely that of the ordained, those "called to full time work". Indeed it involves everyone in the church. This is the whole point of our scripture lesson as well. The whole point of our membership vows, the whole point of the P's we talked out.

The only way this will work out is if as verse 16 says, the only way – only if "each part does its work". This is the vital condition that needs to be fulfilled if the Church is to continue to function effectively and grow into maturity.

As each part does its work, that means Participation, or Service, or Involvement includes ALL of us. Not 50%, not the majority, not most, not even 98.5% but **ALL**. All God's people are to be involved (verse 12) in service so that the church may be built up and attain maturity. Being a Christian, a church member denies us the possibility of being merely a spectator or attender. God calls all to serve, all to be involved, all to participate.

And this also means All for the other 3P's as well. All to pray, all to be present, all to pledge. It can only be realised as each part does its work.

And so isn't it sad when we have asked for volunteers to mend our Songs of the Kingdom song books and no one has stepped forward. And after this – if someone does volunteer it will probably be a person already involved taking one more responsibility.

Next week we will call volunteers to help collate our orders of service on Saturday morning and I pray that we will see each part doing its work and people stepping forward to participate. Well those are the 4 P's. How about the Q's we need to mind – just 2.

The first Q is for **Quantity**. When Paul writes about the growth of the church surely he is thinking about numerical growth as well. An amazing fact of the Early Church we find in Acts is that they grew day by day. They certainly weren't afraid of growing in numbers.

It's just like John Wesley and the early Methodist. As I have said many times, The problem of growth is not one of **size** but one of **structure**. If you build correctly you can be as big as you want to. Wesley's solution to growing members was the class meetings – known today as small groups and this shall be our solution as well.

But for the church to grow in number each part must do its work – we need to witness and share Christ and bring others to Church.

A young evangelist tells of preaching in an isolated community. Twenty-two men were converted in the revival, and a new church was later organized. Most remarkable was the work of an enthusiastic new Christian named Hervie. Hervie had a zeal for God. When the evangelist pursued a non-Christian in the community, the man remarked, "I am glad you came. Hervie was here talking to me. He sure is proud of what the Lord had done for him."

Hervie simply told those men what Christ had done for him and reasoned, "If he did that for me, He will do the same for you." And he would invariably add. "It's been almost a year since I made a change; and I've been praising the Lord ever since." That was what cut these sincere but simple men to the heart. They knew Hervie. Something happened to this man. Something had changed him.

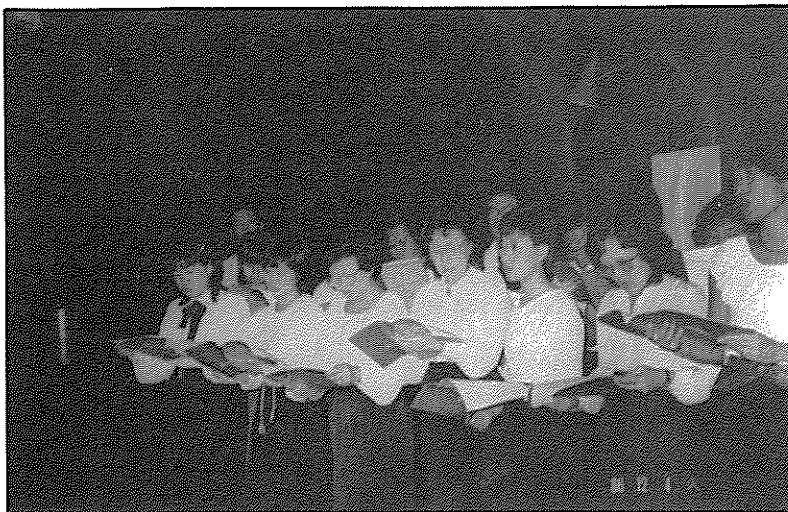
In the same way if Christ means something for us we will try to share Him with others and as a result, the Church will grow in quantity.

The second Q is **QUALITY**. I believe in Biblical church growth, growth in quality will accompany growth in quantity. But it does not come by magic. We need to work with God for it. As each part does its **work**. You see our church needs members who are not satisfied with shallow Christian lives but those who seek the kind of growth in maturity, growth in Quality Paul talks about, but each part must do its work.

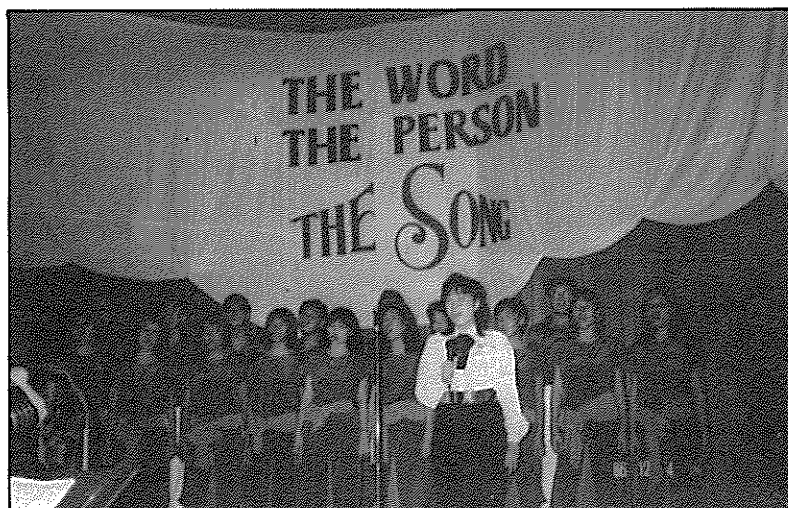
I believe God is renewing His call to us to mind our P's and Q's of membership. Members of this church and members of the Body of Christ. But as the scripture says each part must do its work and surely gives commitment to God to serving Him. Him.

In his book 'The Gift of Love' R. L. Middleton tells about an experience that A. J. Cronin, a British physician turned author, had in the venerable city of Vienna shortly after World War I. Cronin had looked forward to revisiting the city he had known and loved. But when he had finally reached Vienna, he was deeply

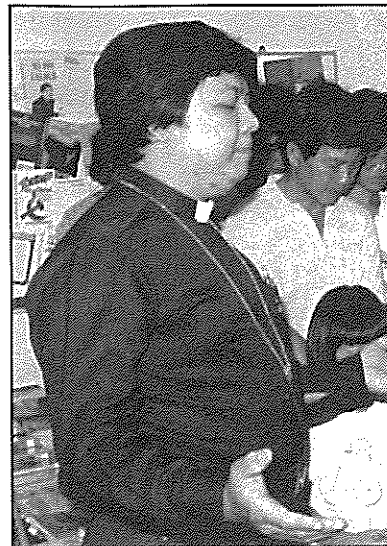
TMC's Christmas Musical



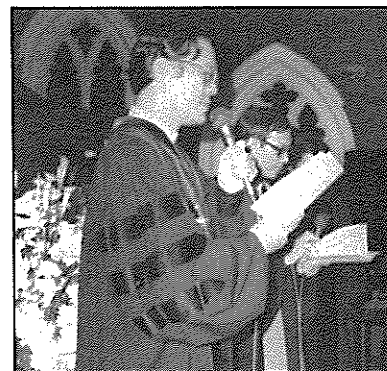
Providing support TMC's Senior Choir



Linda Cheek with a beautiful closing number

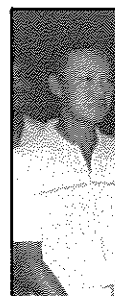


*Opening hours: 9.30 to 12.00 no.
ALL ARE WELCO.*



DECEMBER 1986 was also filled with other activities not captured here on film. These were:

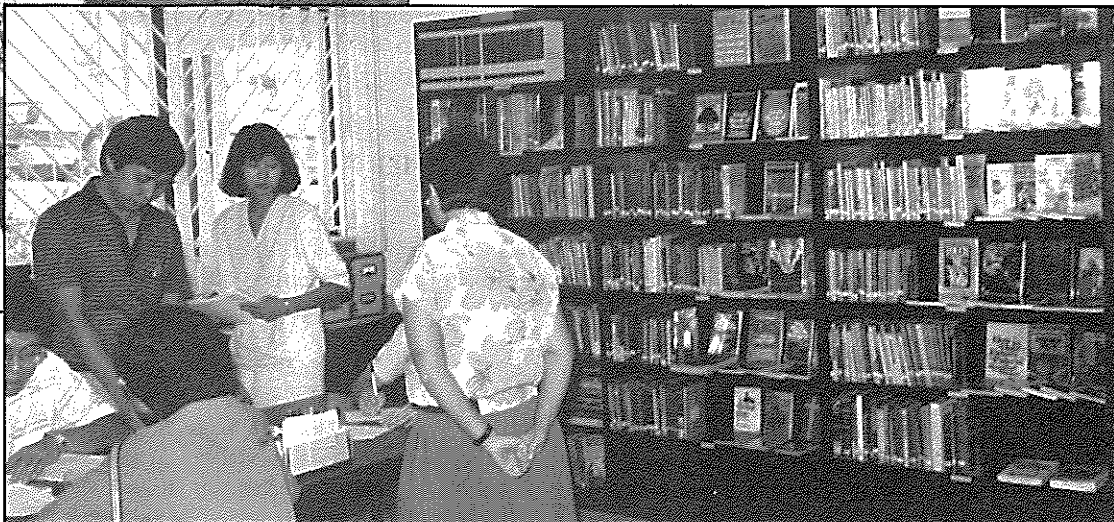
- Pastor delivered an evening service sermon over radio. . . . praise God he got his voice back in time for recording! (18 Dec 1986)
- Infant and Adult Baptism and Confirmation on Christmas Sunday, 21 Dec 1986.
- Christmas Eve "Carols by Candlelights". . . . a good crowd turned up for a wonderful time.
- Christmas and Watchnight Services.



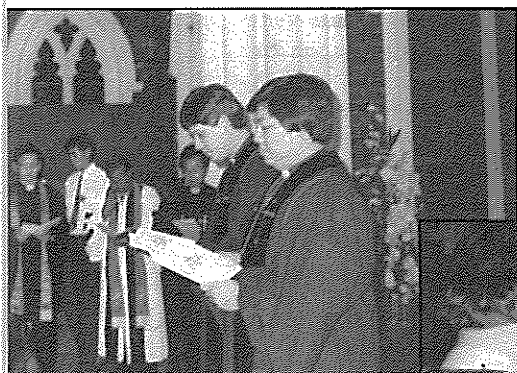
Praise the Lord for His holy



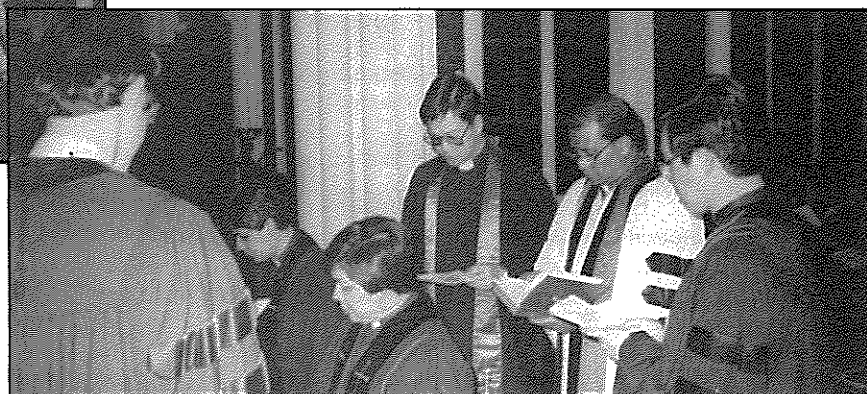
*A prayer of dedication to God
for providing us with a Resource
Centre*



every Sunday.
E



*Ordination of Elders at Wesley Methodist Church. . . .
Rev Melvin Huang and Rev Edmund de Souza on 4.12.1986*



*Pastor surrounded by Methodist Church's
"heavyweights"*



*A "serious" affair
installation of LCEC members on 30.11.1986*

presence in all these activities.

distressed as he saw how the city had been destroyed by the Germans. Walking amid the ruins of the once-beautiful city, he grew furious as he witnessed the ravages of war.

As the cold night fell, he sought shelter in a dimly lit, small church. Sitting out to wait out the winter rainstorm, he turned to see an old man coming into the sanctuary. Clad only in an old suit, but standing painfully erect. The old man walked down the aisle carrying a little girl in his arms.

When he put the cold, poorly dressed little girl down, Cronin saw that she was paralyzed. But as the old man supported her, she knelt at the altar, clinging to the rail.

After a few minutes of prayer, the little girl placed a candle on the small stand adjacent to the altar. Then the old man picked her up and started up the aisle with his precious burden.

Cronin followed them out of the church and watched as the old man gently placed the girl on a dilapidated wagon and pulled a potato sack over her twisted limbs. Unable to hold his silence, Cronin asked the old man if the war had maimed the child. He answered that she was crippled by the same bomb that killed her mother and father.

When Cronin asked if they came often to the church, the old man replied that they came daily to pray. Then he added, "We come to show the good God we're are not angry with Him."

There's a story of a girl visiting a Vienna Museum. Upon seeing a priceless piano that once belonged to Beethoven, she asked the guide if she might play it. He reluctantly said yes. As she hammered out a senseless ditty, the guide told the assembled tourists that Paderewski had just travelled to Vienna just to see that piano.

When the girl heard Paderewski's name mentioned. She stopped playing and asked the guide if Paderewski had played Beethoven's piano.

"No," the guide replied. "We wanted him to, but he said he wasn't worthy."

What we need, what God looks for are those who will not be satisfied with always senseless ditties in their Christian lives but want to have the quality and yet the humility and seriousness of a Paderewski about Christian living. And All of us are called to strive for maturity, for quality in Christian growth.

Such is the commitment and faith God is looking for from his people. Such is the commitment this church needs from its members and friends – so that we may truly mind these our spiritual P's and Q's: **Prayer, Presence, Pledges, Participation, Quality and Quantity**: So that we may truly see our church grow as God wants us to. But this can only happen as each participates its work.

Learning To Pray

— Mrs Nancy Tay

Many of the prayer warriors asked why I burst out laughing continuously when Richard was giving his testimony on Friday, 18th October 1986. As I reflected, it must be the joy of the Lord.

In contrast, six years ago, I was crying and sobbing uncontrollably in one of the Friday night prayer meetings. At that time I lost four jobs through no fault of mine. At the same time Richard was experiencing problems in his place of work. There were also many family problems. So initially, when Richard persuaded me to go to the prayer meetings, I was grouchy, annoyed and complained that "it is so boring to pray". Added to this, I had a persistent cough for nearly two months. Although I saw the doctor a few times, there was no cure. I just could not eat, sleep well nor even concentrate on reading. At one stage, my mother-in-law too suffered from severe chest and abdomen pains, and any in-take of food would make her vomit. She was thin, pale and weak; doctors could not diagnose her illness. Many relatives commented that her days were numbered.

Praise be to the Lord, for by God's grace and mercy, and through perseverance in prayers, events changed for the better. After a month of attending prayer meetings, I got a job through Margaret Tan who was sharing about a vacancy. My cough just disappeared and x'ray by S.A.T.A. confirmed that I was not suffering from tuberculosis or any other illness. About a year later God sent our bible teacher as executive staff to help Richard with his job problems. My relationship with Richard has also become very close and he is now always beaming and glowing. Approximately 3 years later, my brother-in-law, who had been jobless for 10 years, and has hearing impairment coupled with speech defects, secured a job as a clerical assistant in the bank. My mother-in-law was healed through a successful major operation. She is now healthy but needs your prayers for her salvation. To me, all these incidents are miracles through our prayers. Truly, God heard the many petitions of the prayer warriors.

I am branded as a "square" in my office when I refused to accept invitations to join in disco-dancing, "happy hours" or mahjong playing. At times, I feel very lonely in the office. But in

moments of despair, I hummed hymns like "Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning" and "I have a friend in Jesus." It always helps!

Recently I was overjoyed when one of my male engineer colleagues shared with me that he was baptised by the Holy Spirit, a few months ago. He received a spiritual transformation in his life. Equally to my amazement, another surveyor admitted that his sister was delivered from her addiction to gambling when she accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour. I have challenged him to try Jesus too. He replied that he is still exploring in his faith. My prayer is for him to find the truth in Jesus.

I have been prompted to write and share my testimony early one Sunday morning. You know God has made things beautiful in His time. I thank Him for his sure promise in Psalm 3:4 "I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me". Finally I will always claim this, "If God be for us, who can be against us," from Romans 8:31.



I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD EXPECT A RECORD ATTENDANCE THIS SUNDAY.

Date MONTH OF MARCH	Speaker	Testimony
1.3.87	Rev Randy Sing Christ for Asia	Mr Seah Kee Yong Emmanuel Church
8.3.87	Rev David Stitt St Hilda's Church	Mr David Tan Trinity Methodist Church
15.3.87	Mr. Derrick Jacob Christian Library	Mr Robert Lee Full Gospel Assembly
22.3.87	Mr Tan Teng Wai Principal, St Andrew's Junior College	Mrs Maise Khoo Full Gospel Assembly
29.3.87	Pastor N. Suppiah Jesus Lives Church	Mrs Lydia Han Trinity Methodist Church

Family News

CONGRATULATIONS to Albert and Grace Lim on the birth of their baby daughter, Beatrice Lim Hui Min on February 4.

Christian Quotations

GOD

God often visits us, but most of the time we are not home.

French Proverb

God does not demand of us success, but obedience.

Anonymous

HUMILITY

I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other and that the taller we grew in Christian character the more easily we could reach them. I now find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other and that it is not a question of growing taller but of stooping lower.

F. B. Meyer

INSIGHT

Where men sees but withered leaves God sees sweet flowers growing.

Albert Lighton